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T H E
Watermen and Lightermen's
C A S E,

In Relation to the BILL before this Honourable House, *For the Explanation of former Laws made, touching Wherry-men and Watermen, and Joyning the Lightermen to them, and providing one Good Government for both.*

BY which Laws the Lord Mayor and Aldermen (amongst other things) were to Elect and Appoint Eight Watermen, Yearly, to be called Overseers and Rulers; and they were to make such further Rules and Orders, as should to them seem necessary for the Government of the whole, but have no Power by the same Laws, to enforce due Obedience to such Rules and Orders, by which means the Intent of those Laws are rendred ineffectual, by Rude and Disorderly Watermen, taking Advantage thereof, and daily committing Notorious Abuses, to the hazarding Persons Lives and Goods upon the River of *Thames*.

For Remedy whereof, the said Bill makes the Watermen and Lightermen one Society and Company, and Impowers the said Lord Mayor, &c. Yearly to Elect Eight Watermen and Three Lightermen to be called Rulers and Overseers, who together with Assistants, (by the Watermen and Lightermen respectively to be chosen) are to make good Rules, Orders, and Constitutions, for the better and more safe conveying Passengers and Goods by Water, and to annex reasonable Penalties thereto; which said Rules are to be approved of, or altered by the Lord Chief Justices, Lord Mayor, and Court of Aldermen.

And the said Court of Aldermen having perused the said Bill, and finding the same intended only for a Publick Good, have approved thereof, and signified the same by their Order dated the 27th of Feb. 1699.

Note, For want of Power to make good Orders, and to enforce due Obedience thereto, the poor Watermen who have been Maimed in the Wars, as well as the Aged and Decayed, are deprived of their Work and Labour, and Passengers disturbed in taking Boat and Landing, by the Rude and Ungovernable Watermen, notwithstanding all that the Rulers of the said Company could do to the contrary; and for want of Power to enforce due Obedience, as aforesaid, a most sad and deplorable Disaster of late happened, in that near Fifty Passengers were drowned in coming from *Gravesend* in the Tilt-Boat, and smaller Accidents frequently happen; as also for want of Order and Government amongst Lightermen, His Majesty's Customs and other Duties from Coals are lessened, and Owners of Ships, Masters, Seamen, and Labourers, as frequently damnified; in as much as they often quarrel concerning taking their Turns in unlivering Coals and Merchandize from Ships, and refuse to work, to the great Hindrance and staying of Ships from proceeding in their respective Voyages.

Circa 1699